

Shogi history and the Variants

I am delighted to announce that after many years of painstaking and sometimes very frustrating research on the rules of play of the various shogi variants, at long last significant and far reaching new documentary evidence has come to light which assists me enormously in my efforts to re-establish these great games of long ago.

The current research means, however, that we must radically alter our thinking and conclusions about these old games.

In addition to this we are now in close co-operation with Maruo Manabu of Chigasaki and through that gentleman with the Kyoto University Shogi History Group. As mentioned in the last issue much new work has been and is being done on all aspects of shogi history. Clear ideas are still not formed with regard to Dai-Dai upwards and hard and fast rules for these very largest games are not likely to be formulated for some time if indeed ever.

Following a visit by myself and John Fairbairn to Mr Maruo in June, I have asked John Fairbairn kindly to summarise the present state of history knowledge with particular reference to the variants. The first section of this article therefore deals with history and has been somewhat adapted from a manuscript intended for a possible forthcoming book. The second part of the article will give precise alterations to the published rules for Chu and Dai shogi together with some other relevant data on Wa shogi etc.

George Hodges - Ed.

* The article *Chu Shogi and beyond* will be held over this issue to make space for this most important report.

Despite the numerous references to go and backgammon in the laws, diaries and novels of Heian times, the first description of shogi is not until about 1126-30 in Part 13 of the obscurely titled history book *Nichureki*.

Whereas this book mentions go and backgammon but does not give the rules, it gives the moves of the pieces for shogi, says that all pieces promote to Gold on reaching the third rank, and says that reducing the opponent's forces to a solitary King counts as a win.

The pieces are the same as in modern shogi except that no mention is made of a Rook or Bishop. Nor is anything said about the number of pieces, the size of the board or the initial set-up.

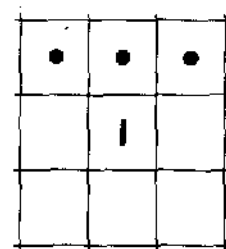
Two reconstructions of this Heian shogi have been suggested by Masukawa Koichi. One version has only an 8 x 8 board; the other has a 9 x 8 board with an extra Gold on the back rank as in modern shogi. This first Japanese form of chess, in whichever version, is clearly cognate with the other forms of chess known throughout the world, especially in South-East Asia.

The distinctively Japanese feature of drops was not then known but it is significant that the concept of a large promotion zone had already been introduced. Whether promotion was compulsory, however, is not clear. The *Nichureki* also describes a larger shogi. It says:

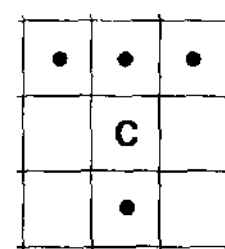
"There is also a 13 x 13 shogi. The Kings are placed in the centre on each side with the Gold Generals on both sides of them. The Silver Generals are next to the Gold Generals and next to them are Silver Generals. Next to them are the Copper Generals and next to them are the Iron Generals. Next to them are the Lances. The Copper Generals cannot go to the four corners. The Iron Generals cannot go back in three directions. Also a Side Mover sits in front of the King and it can go one step forward or any distance left or right. There are also Fierce Tigers. They sit in front of the Silver Generals and can go one step to the four corners. Flying Dragons sit in front of the Knights and fly along the four diagonals. The Free Chariots sit in front of the Lances and can go any distance forward or back. A Go-between sits in front at the centre of the Pawns and can go one step forward or back."

P	P	P	P	P	P	GB	P	P	P	P	P	P
FC	FD			FT		SM		FT			FD	FC
L	N	I	C	S	G	K	G	S	C	I	N	L

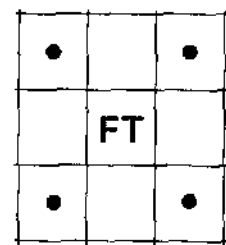
Despite the repetitions and lacunae of the *Nichureki* text the initial set-up is agreed as that shown above. But there is some doubt about the moves. Giving more credence to later texts Maruo Manabu suggests the following for those pieces not in ordinary shogi:



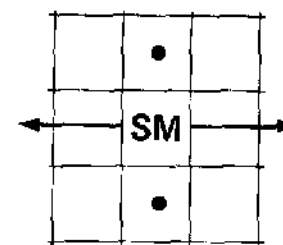
Iron General



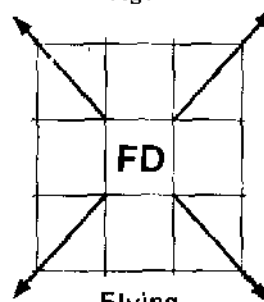
Copper General



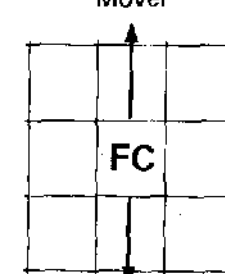
Fierce Tiger



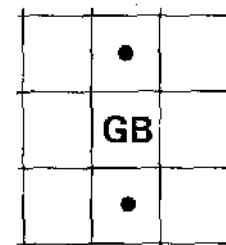
Side Mover



Flying Dragon



Free Chariot



Go-between

and he assumes all the pieces promote to Gold at the third rank, except for the Flying Dragon, which adds the power to go one step in the four orthogonal directions. (But it is not a good game, he says.)

The conclusion we can draw from this detail in *Nichureki* is that the large shogi was not then a widely known game. It may indeed have been recently invented. No conclusion can be drawn from the reference to the smaller shogi since this seems to be intended merely as a preamble to the description of the larger version.

That a small shogi was already well known can be inferred from passing mentions of it in earlier books. The first reference is in Volume 7 of the *Kirinsho*, a book of the early 11th century written by a Heian courtier, the *Dainagon* Fujiwara no Yukinari.

Yukinari is famous as one of the great calligraphers and in *Kirinsho* he describes how shogi pieces should be written:

"[For the name of the piece] either square script or cursive script will do. The strokes should be thin but solid are boldly show the outline. The character on the top half of the piece should be large and bold in either square script or cursive script and it should be written in graceful symmetry. The character for Gold [on the underside of the piece] should be written in grass script. Since shogi pieces are small place them on a stand held in the hand before writing or them."

The significance of this text is manifold if we can make some assumptions. First, promotion applied to most pieces. Second, the Rook and Bishop did not then exist (they do not promote to Gold). Third, by the same reasoning and if the reconstruction of the large shogi is correct, that game did not exist. Fourth, the pieces have names with two characters, not one as in China and Korea.

According to Masukawa the preference for binomes can be attributed to an edict of 713 which revised many names into binomes. If he is right this may be a clue to an early dating for shogi. The epithets affixed to the names of the pieces to make them binomial were simply products of Heian times, the King being really a Jade General and the top half of the Lance (Fragrant Chariot) and Knight (Laurel Horse) names referring to incense and cinnamon respectively.

Though the Rook (Flying Chariot) and Bishop (Horned Chariot) did not exist then, and the structure of their names argues for a separate development, they may still contain references to treasure. The name of the promoted Rook is literally Dragon Jade and the *-me* of *ryume* (Dragon Horse: promoted Bishop) has been interpreted by Yamamoto Teikai as *agate* (*me* being an alternative form of *meno*).

The basic names of the pieces are of course war terms: generals, horses, chariots and soldiers. This applies even to the Rook and Bishop. The true meaning of *kakugyo* (the Bishop) is not "diagonal goer" but more probably "horned chariot". Recent research having shown that the *-gyo* refers to a different type of chariot than the *-sha* of *hisha* (the Rook) the dragon references on both pieces are not to the mythological creators but to horses of great stature.

From these references to a new type of chariot or cart and to magnificent horses Okuyama Koju has deduced that the Rook and Bishop were introduced in the early 10th century, this being a time when what he calls: the Northern horse culture of Asia (the Mongols) began to have an impact on Japan. This means assuming, of course, that two versions of small shogi co-existed for some time, but there is nothing unreasonable in that.

Though there is much less to go on Okuyama also describes the introduction of shogi itself to the 8th century. But whether it came from China, as is commonly believed, is arguable. Masukawa and Kimura Yoshinori in particular favour the theory that chess was transmitted from India to the East via a northern (Tibetan, Chinese) route and a southern (Burmese, Thai) route, and that shogi derives from the version that followed the southern route by way, eventually, of South China and Korea, perhaps fusing in Korea with the northern strain.

Yet for all the brilliant work done by the researchers mentioned above knowledge of shogi before the 12th century is still largely lost in inspissated gloom of history. In the 12th century, however, references to shogi in diaries begin to be frequent. The *Shinsarugakuki* of Fujiwara no Akahira (1058-65) contain the first such mention and there are also mentions in the diary of a Lord Steward of the Empress (1129), in the diary of Fujiwara no Yorinanga (1149) and in other books and diaries throughout the rest of that century. The references are to shogi and large shogi and we have to assume they mean the forms given in *Nichureki*.

No further light penetrates the gloom for the next 150 years, then in the mid 14th century a collection of personal letters entitled *Shinsen Yugaku Orai* suddenly mentions large shogi and middle shogi without saying what they are or how extensively they were played. It is probably safe to assume that middle shogi refers to the name given here, even though the first mention of it in detail is still a century away, but whether the large shogi is the Heian version or the 15 x 15 version is a question that cannot be answered quite so safely.

It is tempting to set up a symmetrical paradigm of 9 x 9 little shogi, 12 x 12 middle shogi and 15 x 15 large shogi but we have no idea at all when the little shogi became 9 x 9. In any event, whatever large shogi was it eventually became popular enough to be referred to simply as shogi.

The Muromachi poet Ise Sadayori, in his collection of mores and etiquette *Sogo Ozoshi*, gave the following protocol for shogi:

"When you face your shogi opponent open the box containing the pieces and put the pieces on the board.

.. to finish setting them up too quickly is a breach of politeness. It is also impolite to be too slow and to make the opponent wait. Practise therefore so that you can set up the pieces in just the right time. This applies also to both middle shogi and little shogi."

This reference to little shogi is important for shogi by itself clearly means large shogi. And that this was not now the Heian large shogi can perhaps be deduced from a diary entry for the 2nd of the first month, 1424 in the *Hanasakai Sandaikai*: "Played shogi with Sedate Motoyuki I received a Free King handicap."

Though this may relate to middle shogi (which, like the later large shogi, has a Free King) it is striking that the many diary references of the time seem to maintain the distinction between shogi, middle shogi and little shogi. For instance, the diary of the father of the Emperor Gohanazono, Gosukoin, (the *Kanmon Gyoko*) has, in an entry for the 22nd of the eighth month 1435: "His Majesty the Emperor played little shogi with the *kanpaku* (chief adviser to the Emperor). In all three games the *kanpaku* lost." Similar references abound throughout the 15th century, and indeed many of them imply that little shogi was generally regarded as merely a boys' game.

No detail of any of the games is forthcoming until the great Muromachi politician Ichijo Kanera (regent, prime minister and *kanpaku*) mentions the names of the middle shogi pieces in his *Aro Kassen Monogatari* of 1478.

A book published in 1811 (but probably written earlier), *Shogi Rokushu no Zushiki*, purports to be a copy of a document dated 1443. Notwithstanding its title (Six kinds of shogi illustrated) it describes only four kinds of shogi, knowledge of middle and little shogi apparently (and justifiably for 1811) being taken for granted.

The games it does describe are large shogi (or great shogi, to distinguish it from the Heian version) with 15 x 15 squares and 130 pieces, great-great shogi (17 x 17 squares, 192 pieces), ultra-great-great shogi (19 x 19 squares, also 192 pieces) and grand shogi (25 x 25 squares, 354 pieces). This would be the earliest mention of these larger games, pre-dating the next by 251 years.

Whilst it is not impossible that this book of 1443-cum-1811 is genuine, it would be so devastatingly significant that it seems best to be sceptical about it. There are several good if inconclusive grounds for doubting it anyway. Apart from its isolation there are some niggling internal inconsistencies. The sheer size of the games is also worth considering.

One obstacle to the spread of any form of shogi in the middle ages was lack of equipment. Even among the wealthy courtiers there are many diary references to borrowing boards or pieces and people who wrote their own pieces often had to explain them to the borrowers. There was no artisan class of board or piece makers until the very end of the middle ages, so that it is difficult to imagine any very large boards that may have existed not arousing enough interest to be mentioned elsewhere.

There is also not a single piece of equipment surviving from these bigger games.

In short we must at present doubt whether the larger games were invented before, or much before, Edo times, and any judgements as to when Heian large shogi was replaced by great shogi (both called dai shogi in Japanese) should be reserved.

As just mentioned, lack of equipment hampered the spread of shogi in the middle ages. Another obstacle was that few people were then literate enough to read the calligraphy on the pieces. The less elaborate games of grand backgammon were much easier to learn and were popular gambling pastimes. Proof of the lack of popularity of shogi can perhaps be inferred from the fact that unlike go and backgammon it was not subject to the frequent prohibitions against gambling.

Nevertheless it did spread. In particular the military men of the Ashikaga shogunate became ardent players and probably from them it reached the burgeoning merchant class. It seems clear, however, that only middle and little shogi spread this far. At any rate the next time we hear of any new developments in shogi is in the late 16th century when little shogi with drops suddenly appeared in the literature.

How and when drops came about the literature, amazingly, doesn't say. Had drops been known in the early formative days of any of the larger games from middle shogi up, those games would surely have incorporated such an unusual feature somehow. If so much is true we can then assume drops were not known until at least the 15th century.

This speculation is reinforced by a significant change in Japanese civil warfare from the 15th century onwards. Though soldiers were no less brutal, changing sides became an accepted alternative to extermination. Given the peculiar nature of the shogi pieces — the lack of colour distinction rather than the shape, which is derived from ancient sutra boards and is common in Japan — it is easy to see (only in retrospect, of course) how drops came to be introduced. But drops may have been as late as the middle of the 16th century. There is a tenuous tradition that attributes various changes in shogi to the Emperor Gonara (r. 1536-1557) but there are no documents to support it, except, in an oblique way, a unique diagram in the *Sho-shogi Zushiki*.



The diagram (above) is of a 42-piece version of little shogi. The first edition of 1694 says nothing about the extra piece on 5i (and 5h), which is the Drunk Elephant already known in middle shogi the top part of the diagram simply shows the moves of some of the pieces). The edition of 1696, however, adds the comment that it was removed by order of Gonara. We have no other document with little shogi described. It is always taken for granted as being known and the moves of those pieces in the larger games that exist in little shogi are almost never explained. It may be significant for the dating of the larger games that they do explain the Drunk Elephant's move. It is of course pertinent to ask whether this enlarged little shogi is genuine. Apparently it is. Until recently the oldest shogi pieces known were those excavated in 1943-44 from a grave of the Asakura clan in Fukui. They have been dated to 1567 and the 98 pieces, of which 20 are illegible, contain exactly those pieces that would be needed for this little shogi and no others. There are Kings, Golds, Silvers, Lances, Pawns, Rooks, Bishops (10!) — and Drunk Elephants. Apart from the lack of the other pieces the presence of Knights seems to rule out middle shogi.

One older piece has since been found, in 1976 in a dig at Kamikuse castle in the environs of Kyoto. Strangely that too was a Drunk Elephant. It is dated around 1350, which is significant, but there is no telling whether it belongs to middle shogi, little shogi or what.

It may be possible therefore that, as tradition says, the Drunk Elephant was purged from little shogi — and there would be a good reason for that. In middle shogi the Drunk Elephant promotes to a Crown Prince which becomes effectively a second King that also has to be captured. If this applied to little shogi too, drops could make the game almost unplayable since the Drunk Elephant could be dropped in the promotion zone for quick promotion, and more than once. The appearance of drops and the disappearance of the Drunk Elephant could be connected.

Middle shogi, in contrast, seems to have survived untouched (of the other shogis there is no mention this early). But in 1612 Tokugawa Iyasu, the ruler of a Japan made stable for the first time in centuries, instituted under the Superintendent of Shrines and Temples a Board of Go and Shogi. At first he appointed the priest Honinbo Sensa, the foremost player of both games, to the post, to which were attached considerable prestige and emoluments.

Although the job seems to have been a sinecure Sansa decided to accept headship of the Board of Go and he passed the shogi incumbency to Ohashi Sokei, a member of the merchant class but second in shogi only to Sansa. The prestige of this shogunal appointment and the control the Board of Shogi could exercise over publishing made the form of shogi (little, with drops) played by Sense and Sokei extremely dominant. At least some of the great players that followed them did, however, also play middle shogi. The first Ito Sokan published in 1687 a collection of 50 middle shogi problems. Ito Sokan III did the same in 1746 but his problems (if that is what they are: or are they game positions?) have no solutions and are very hard. They represent a pinnacle of middle shogi achievement and to date only 30 of the 50 have been satisfactorily solved.

There is a suggestion that the great intricacy of the endgame in middle shogi, especially compared to the relatively dull for at least slow opening, led to players concentrating on endgame problems and this contributed greatly to its decline. At any rate against only six extant historical games there are 224 problems remaining. Despite its decline middle shogi has not died. Its flame has flickered above all in the area where it was probably invented: West Japan, and even in the present century the doyen of little-shogi players, *Meijin* Oyama Yasuharu has said:

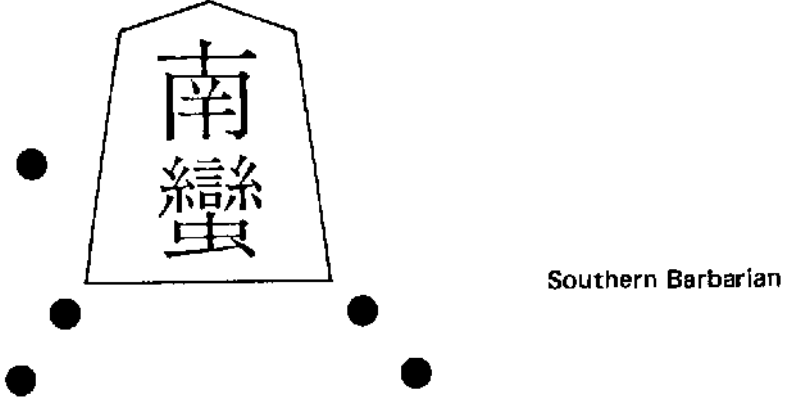
"Ever since I was small I have often played middle shogi. My cautious and tenacious shogi style is probably due to the influence it has had. I believe the reason I think above all about improving the cohesion of my pieces is that I have played middle shogi" *Shogi Sakai* No. 7, 1970)

Throughout the 17th century little shogi blossomed, overshadowed in prestige and popularity only by go. But at a time when both games were enjoying a golden age, the Genroku era at the end of that century, a clutch of books brought the larger shogi variants to notice. Any opinions as to when these games were invented have to be nebulous. There are doubts engendered by *Shogi Rokushu no Zushiki* already mentioned, but there are doubts too whether, apart from large, the games were even played.

We can categorise the various shogis into two main groups: those we know were played and those that apparently were not. To the first class belongs the little-middle-large (15 x 15) family, which share too the feature that the pieces are related and all either designate elements of warfare or animals to which a conventional epithet has been added (e.g. angry boar, violent ox). Somewhere along the line, of course, large shogi died. To the second class belong all the other games. Great-great, ultra-great-great and grand shogi comprise a group on their own distinguished by the fact that to the two types of pieces of the first family (appurtenances of war and animals) is added a third: Buddhist words, such as Guardians of the Gods and Doves.

There is in *Shogi Zushiki* also mention of a 36 x 36 huge-board (*taikyoku*) shogi which, if it really existed, presumably belonged to this group too. Not surprisingly it is assumed that priests invented these games. Yamato (*wa*) shogi and exotic (*tenjiku*) shogi are not part of this group but do form part of the overall class because of another feature.

Whereas the instructions for playing the first family of games is often defective in the old literature (and very much defective in the case of large shogi) it is always obvious that instructions are being given. With the bigger group of games the information is much more defective and contradictory, and instructions about the rules of play are totally lacking. The moves are given, though not clearly, but promotion rules, rules about two Kings on the same side, rules about pieces that can move twice and a host of other important practical points are completely ignored. The kind of contradictions we are dealing with can be illustrated by reference to *Shogi Zushiki's* description of great-great shogi.



Southern Barbarian

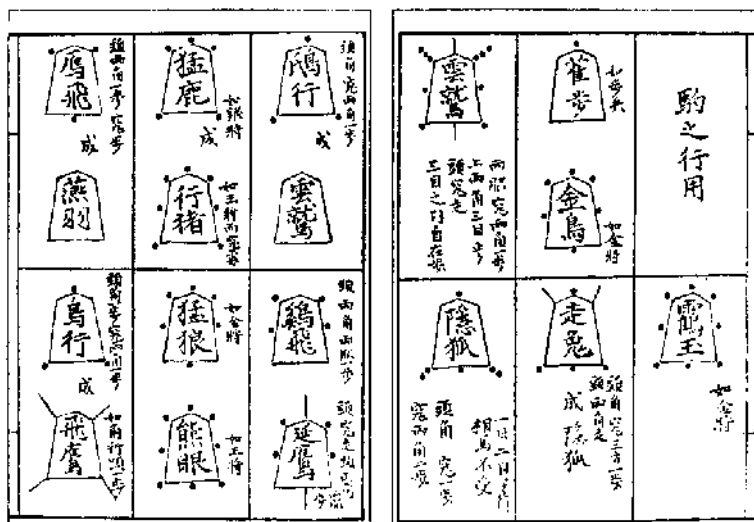
The diagram above is given for the move of the Southern Barbarian and below it in Chinese (another sign of the sacerdotal influence perhaps) is an explanation of the move: "Moves two steps on the two lower diagonals or one step to the left sideways." Earlier on the page it is described as promoting to a White Elephant, but how it ever gets to the promotion zone if it cannot move forward is left to the imagination. *Shogi Rokoshu no Zushiki* gives the move as two steps to either side or one step forward or back or one step on the two forward diagonals, with which *Kokon Shogi Zui* agrees. *Sho-shogi Zushiki*, however, agrees with *Shogi Zushiki*.

The moves of most of the other pieces are similarly disputed, with sometimes three or four variations, and there is no pattern of agreement between any two particular texts. Several of the promotions are also inconsistent.

Another problem we have is to do with the word *odoru* (literally, to dance). This word is used to describe the type of move depicted by two dots (as in the Southern Barbarian's move above). This power of move is common and similar three or more dot-movers exist. Because this word or this type of move is no longer used in Japanese games we no longer know what it means. Does it mean the piece can go to either square even if this involves jumping, or does a piece on the first square prevent it from jumping to the second (that is, it is a limited ranging piece)? There are lots of straws of evidence either way, but not enough clay to bind them into a solid well of fact. Nevertheless the balance of evidence is definitely in favour of choosing the meaning that jumping is not allowed, and this incidentally is backed by native feelings for the semantics of the word. (Do not be deceived by the English equivalent "dance") Two strong pieces of evidence are often quoted: one is the known move of the Eagle in bird shogi (this is a limited ranging piece, but the author avoided using specific words like *odoru* in describing the moves); the other is that a ward specifically meaning jump (*etsu*) is used in the same texts, though pieces that *etsu* are never also step-movers in the same direction. Most of the other evidence has to do with the language of the texts but it might also be considered that limited ranging pieces are known in Chinese chess. There is, however, an enormous counterbalance to the linguistic evidence.

To take the extreme though not exclusive case, grand shogi has in its initial set-up seven solidly packed 25-square ranks of pieces on each side. The sheer logistical difficulty of moving most of these pieces unless we assume *odoru* includes jumping defies common sense.

But this dilemma is dehorned by modern shogi researchers in Japan by their belief that these games were never played, nor were they meant to be played. They are regarded as idiocies of the type nowadays inspired by the *Guinness Book of Records*. Though an assumption has to be made in Yamato shogi about *odoru* it is assumed incidentally among modern players in Japan that jumping is not allowed.



Part of the description of Yamato shogi in *Shogi Zushiki* — a different version from that now proposed by TSA

But Yamato shogi is a special case anyway. The three sources of it in the literature are so contradictory as to imply there were completely different ways of playing it. One version (in two sources, but both differing: *Shogi Zushiki* and *Kokon Shogi Zui*) has pieces with generally very limited powers. This, some fragmentary linguistic evidence in *Kokon Shogi Zui* and its possible date — late 17th century — make it not impossible that it was played with drops. The other version, from *Sho-shogi Zushiki*, has many long-range pieces, which rule out drops. And there are other important differences.

Now all these games appeared in print about the end of the 17th century. But not only did they appear out of the blue; they seem to have gone back into the void almost at once. Than apart from reprints of these first editions nothing new has ever appeared except for the 1811 (*Shogi Rokushu no Zushiki*, the reliability of which has already been questioned. I recently saw a von Danikenesque book by an American who had the nerve and financial sense to claim that spacemen had landed in ancient Japan. Are the large shogis further evidence of super-intelligent beings passing through Earth?

Bird shogi is definitely a nine-day wonder. Despite traditionally being attributed to the 9th *Meijin* Ohashi Soei it was invented by his pupil Toyota Genryu. It was first published in 1828 but apparently sales were slow and a second edition with six illustrative games and a handicap system was issued in 1833. That still had no impact, which is remarkable since it is undoubtedly a very fine game.

Maruo Manubu has, however, found an allusive reference to it in Meiji times though with the names somewhat altered, and it has recently been re-introduced into Japan by the Shogi Association. It is proving to be highly popular with those who learn it.

Apart from the modern three-handed shogi, which is clearly based on little shogi, I would mention two other chess variants here; wide shogi and shogi of the seven kingdoms. They are completely outside the mainstream of Japanese chess.

Wide shogi is said to have been invented by the Confucian scholar Ogyu Sorai (1666-1728) apparently as a conscious derivative of Chinese chess. The pieces are round and move in ways not seen in Japanese chess. It should be mentioned that there is a tradition that the game actually did originate in China, invented by Chao Wuchiu (1033-1110). Clearly this needs more research.

The shogi of the seven kingdoms is definitely a Chinese game, attributable to Szu-ma Wenkung of the Sung dynasty. The reason it is mentioned here, and the reason no doubt that it is often mentioned in the Japanese literature, is that it was particularly popular with the Tokugawa shogun Yoshimune's son Munetaka (1628-1700) and his concubines. But its popularity may not have been unconnected with the fact that the rules stipulate penalties of drinking cups of wine for various misdemeanours, such as illegal moves and losing!

It is the intention of TSA to eventually produce playing equipment and rules of play for all the above mentioned Shogi variants. Further news as and when these become available will be announced in SHOGI magazine.



We now give the major alterations that will need to be made to the rules that have been published for some of the Shogi variants. It must be stressed that research is still going on apace particularly on the variants from Dai-Dai-Shogi upwards.

In Issue No. 25 we advertised Wa Shogi sets and stated that the game was played with drops. Current research seems to indicate that this is not the case and although the evidence for this is far from overwhelming, TSA now takes the official view that the game is indeed played without drops. A new leaflet has been prepared and the sets are now available with that new leaflet.

Price only £ 16.00 per set plus postage and packing please at 85p for UK and £2.50 for overseas surface mail. Overseas airmail costs £4.50

As far as Dai Shogi (15 x 15) is concerned it is now clear that four of the pieces in the sets had the wrong promotions marked on them. These pieces were the Cat Sword (CSw) promoting to a Free Demon (FDe); The Flying Dragon (FD) promoting to a Square Mover (SMo); The Iron General (I) promoting to Free Iron (Fir) and the Stone General (St) becoming a Free Stone (FSt).

All these four pieces correctly promote to a Gold General. We have now manufactured the necessary replacements and if anyone who has bought a Dai Shogi set will contact us we will send you the replacement pieces free of charge. A new leaflet on Dai Shogi is in preparation and will be announced in due course.

The published rules of Dai Shogi and the larger games that appeared in The Great Shogi games booklet can now regrettably only be seen as playable versions of these games and as mentioned in the historical section above it seems unlikely that hard and fast rules can be established for these variants as it would appear that they were never played at all! It is thought that they were simply the products of a competition or two to invent larger games although this is only a conclusion arrived at due to the most exasperating lack of evidence or documentation on these forms.

As far as Dai Shogi is concerned it is also thought to be the case that the special rules for the Lion, promotion etc that occur in Middle Shogi were not carried over to that game although, again, this is not yet convincingly established. Research continues into Dai.

We now come to Middle Shogi (Chu Shogi) and in the case of this game a certain amount of difficulty has been experienced in that several of the ancient sources as well as quite modern writings have bred a good deal of confusion about the rules as well as, unfortunately, stating rules as a fact that are non-existent!

Difficulties have been experienced in the exact understanding of the Lion and its special rules regarding capture as well as in the area of non-promotion of a piece when it enters the promotion zone. A completely new leaflet of 8 pages A4 is nearing completion and will be available by mid October priced £1.00 including postage. This leaflet will henceforth also be included with any Middle Shogi sets from TSA.

To clarify any areas of confusion that they may still persist we reproduce hereunder a section of this leaflet on the general rules of the game. This is now thought to be quite definitive and since the discovery of the historical games, many aspects have been established beyond doubt.

It is the intention to eventually publish the historical games of Middle Shogi in SHOGI magazine, but this will be done over a period of time so as not to take up too much space that many readers prefer to see, and rightly so, devoted to the normal game.

RULES FOR MIDDLE SHOGI

1) The 9th - 12th ranks furthest from each player are known as



that player's "Promotion Zone". Whenever a player's pieces (except the King, Free King or Lion) enter this zone, they have the option of "promotion". That is, they may acquire additional or other powers. The promoted status is shown by turning the piece over and once a piece has been promoted it remains so. In Middle Shogi whenever a piece (except a Pawn) moves into the promotion zone and it is *not* promoted it may not promote on that player's next move, unless it makes a capture (which may be anywhere on the board). But thereafter it may promote, whether or not a capture is made, so long as the move is wholly or partly within the promotion zone.

If the Pawn is not promoted at the 9th rank it **MUST** remain as a Pawn until it reaches the 12th rank at which stage it **MUST** promote. This rule is conceivably a type of penalty for forgetting to promote the Pawn, since there would scarcely be a case in which the Pawn would not be promoted upon entry to the zone.

2) The Lion is a very special piece indeed and has an extremely complex move as given above. There are also special rules regarding its capture:

a) A Lion may capture an opposing Lion that is on a (2) square **ONLY IF** the enemy Lion is unprotected.

b) If your Lion is captured by one of your opponent's pieces other than his Lion, then you may not capture his Lion immediately, except with another Lion, but must wait one move.

(There is one exception to these rules, see d) below)

c) If your Lion is on an adjacent square to the enemy Lion, you may capture it (whether it is protected or not): in the normal way, by "igui", or by capturing it and moving on.

d) "Double Capture" positions

Rules 2a) and 2b) are overridden in cases where your Lion can capture two pieces including the opposing Lion in the same move; Your opponent may then capture your Lion immediately. However, the **FIRST** piece so captured may **NOT** be a Pawn or a Go-between.

NOTES:

i) Should *your* Lion be attacking the opposing Lion but it is so positioned that it is between the Lion and an otherwise unobstructed protecting piece, then the opposing Lion is still protected and rule 2a applies. The defending piece is called the "Hidden Protector".

ii) The Horned Falcon and the Soaring Eagle have "Lion power" in the directions marked (1) and (2) in the diagrams. That is, they can capture two pieces at once, jump to (2), capture without moving ("igui"), make passing moves, move to a (1) square etc.

3) If a perpetually recurring sequence of moves occurs this is known as *sennichite*. This is not allowed and the player beginning the sequence must vary his move. This rule is different from normal Shogi. There are cases in the endgame where repetition of moves is inevitable (at least eventually) and, it seems likely that, the game is declared drawn.

4) If your opponent has promoted his Drunk Elephant to a Crown Prince, he then has, in effect, two "Kings"! You must then capture **BOTH** of these pieces in order to win the game.

OBJECT OF THE GAME

The object of the game is to capture the King or if your opponent has promoted his Drunk Elephant, to capture the King **AND** the Crown Prince.

The game can also be won by.

a) Capturing all of your opponent's pieces except his King.

The old texts say that a Gold and King against a bare King wins. This is taken to mean that a bare King loses because it is impossible to have less than a Gold (all pieces promote to at least a Gold or better or have higher initial power anyway) and it is not necessary to play out the sometimes difficult ending.

b) One player can resign at any time.

c) The old texts also gave a fatuous rule that if a player overlooks a check on his King in the first 20 moves (10 moves Western style) he loses.

Notes for chess and Shogi players

It is probably reasonable to assume that all students of Middle Shogi have some fundamental knowledge of Western chess or Shogi and it is not proposed, therefore, to go into fine detail with regard to check, methods of movement, capture and other basic aspects that are common to most forms of chess. Although in Middle Shogi there are no differences of colour between the pieces, the side which moves first is always referred to as "Black" and the other side as "White". Middle Shogi differs from normal Shogi in that: Black plays down the board, captured pieces are not used again and touchmove is enforced.

The concept of "stalemate" as in Western chess is not present in Shogi since a King can legally move into check.

It is clear that certain freakish and academic positions might occur or could be constructed in which clear application of the given rules might not be immediately apparent. Should such problems present themselves then the solution lies in appreciation of the Japanese spirit of the game.